



## WHEN ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS TOO MANY

by Monica Wacker

This is a true story about a cat population problem. Like many problems, it began with a particular attitude or belief system. I wish I could tell you exactly what the attitude or beliefs were but to this day I have not figured it out. I can only speculate. Perhaps the owner didn't want to spend money on spaying or neutering. Maybe the owner did not have the money to do so. Possibly, he has certain values or beliefs about not interfering with "nature". Likely, there was also an element of denial--the cats would all somehow find homes. Unfortunately, this owner's inaction and lack of planning resulted in many kittens last year. It was difficult to keep track of how many but my guess is that four adult females had about four kittens each, twice in the year. That equals approximately thirty-two kittens!! In addition to the kittens, there were seven or so adult cats.

The owner was only able to find homes for about half of the first batch of kittens. This was worrisome enough but add to this the concern that the remaining members of the first batch of kittens would also soon be old enough to mate! Many people love cats and kittens but would you be able to find homes for thirty-two or more in one year?

Thankfully, the Royal City Humane Society was available with the resources and expertise to deal with this out-of-control situation. It wasn't easy though. One person's inaction created a problem that required extensive vet costs and the time and dedication of many R.C.H.S. volunteers to fix. The saddest part is that due to their lack of human handling from birth, many of the kittens have been harder to place than their well-handled peers. They are loving but timid. And so some of them remain in the R.C.H.S. shelter--waiting for owners and homes with the extra bit of patience, love and understanding they need.

There are many lessons to be learned here. The most obvious one is the importance of spaying and neutering pets as an act of both responsibility and kindness. A perhaps less obvious lesson is that pet owners need to plan ahead. It takes planning to ensure that pets get their shots and are spayed and neutered. It also takes planning to ensure that you have enough financial resources to provide vet care for a pet. Compassion, planning and action on those plans are important to protect pets from the needless suffering of being unwanted, discarded, frightened, and homeless.



**THE GREATEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE....PLEASE, SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR PETS  
CONTACT US ABOUT OUR SPAY/NEUTER PROGRAMS...604-524-6447**

## VOLUNTEER PROFILES

by Doreen Stocks



### DAVE LEGGATT

In this issue of our newsletter we would like to introduce another of our long term shelter volunteers. David Leggatt. Volunteers do all the work that keeps our shelter and R.C.H.S, running smoothly and efficiently so that we can help as many animals as possible.

Dave began as a volunteer at our old cat shelter in 2003 so he's put in many hours of scooping, sweeping, feeding, cleaning and most important handing out affection and attention to the never ending procession of homeless and abandoned cats who come our way. Over the years Dave has seen at least 800 cats come and go but there's one who stands out from the pack in his memories - "Suzie" - or Her Royal Highness, Suzie, as she preferred to be called. Fortunately for all of us and Suzie she now has a real home where she reigns supreme. For those of you who didn't have the pleasure, Suzie was without a doubt the most temperamental and challenging "guest" we've had and she spent more than two years at the shelter training the volunteers to do things her way or else.

Dave's been around long enough to have put in many arduous hours at garage sale fundraisers which we used to do spring and fall.

Dave is a true B.C.er.- born at Royal Columbian Hospital and raised in Port Coquitlam. Dave grew up in a home where dogs and cats were part of the family and learned to care for and to care about animals. One of his favourite childhood pets was a cat named Ginger and Ginger taught Dave to love and respect cats so thanks to Ginger our shelter cats have a friend named Dave.

Dave is serious about helping companion animals and completed a First Aid for Pets course at Douglas College in 2007 so he will be able to make educated decisions should an animal emergency present itself at any point during his volunteer activities, at home or away.

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## KITTY PROFILES

### DENTON



Denton came to us in 2006 as a scruffy, skinny homeless guy who had found a woman to befriend and feed him on her patio. When the snow and cold arrived he tried to move in but the resident cats would have none of that so Denton came to RCHS. In the beginning he was pretty cautious and stayed well back

when people he didn't know were around. Gradually he grew to trust all the volunteers and, he became friends with the shelter's resident alpha male Noodles. This gave him the confidence he needed.

Denton displays a nurturing side to his tough guy nature whenever a younger male kitten arrives at the shelter and is feeling scared Denton sort of takes him under his wing and protects him from the meanies.

He is very gentle and affectionate but also fiercely proud and independent as a Maine Coon cat should be and he prefers the company of women.



Denton would make the most wonderful and loving companion, he would be so grateful if someone gave him a home! As well as preferring the company of women he would probably enjoy the company of a younger cat and some outdoor exposure to a patio or yard.

# A "SPECIAL NEEDS" CAT & THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE HIM

Lori Walker



JOE AND HIS BEST FRIEND

good health, and short of a trip to the vet for vaccination, or a spay or neuter, we simply couldn't imagine living with a high maintenance model.

Then came Joe. Joe and his sister Rose had luck on their side the day Doreen heard their plaintive mews. She rescued the two shivering flea-bitten newborns that had somehow been separated from their feral mother as she relocated her litter. Doreen kept the two alive with eyedropper fed kitten formula, locating kitty foster moms, and giving them the kind of TLC that makes her renowned in these parts. When they came home with us we were thrilled at the chance to help give the little orphans a good life.

They make a beautiful matched set. Sister Rose has a delicate feminine face with silky long black and white fur that spills over her legs like bloomers. Brother Joe has a short coat, Charlie Chaplin moustache and large eyes that can look brainy and brainless at the same time. He regularly spots a fresh scratch on his nose that has resulted from wrestling with his sister.

The health issues emerged two years ago. When Joe didn't get up from bed, then was unable to stand, we rushed

We've known folks with cats who needed special care. The contractor who renovated our kitchen in Sapperton had two of them - geriatric diabetics whose use of the litter box was "hit and miss." And while we admired him for his obvious dedication, we wondered if he wasn't slightly nutty. Our cats were always blessed with

him off to Alpine Animal Hospital. As we figured out what was going on we traveled back and forth from the day vet to the night vet with his IV in tow. The prognosis was Hepatic lipidosis, also known as "feline fatty liver syndrome" and common with overweight or "stressed" cats. In Joe's case it was a side effect of diabetes. The vet bills were hefty, and the thought of a feeding tube and insulin shots weighed heavy on us as well. But the burden of a decision to let Joe go was heavier still. Joe and my preteen son had forged a special bond. Saying goodbye to this cat was going to be tough, but we warned our kids that if Joe didn't start eating after returning home, we might have to do just that.

The cat dish was empty that evening, and Joe stood by cleaning his whiskers. With great relief we decided we could probably cope if Joe could, and so the insulin regime began. It took about ten minutes at the vet learning about how to use the needle and another couple of days to feel comfortable with the whole thing. I got pretty confident about giving subcutaneous shots, and Joe hardly notices. We joke that our neighbours must think we use heroin as I parade through the house with needle in hand searching out Mr. Sweet Pee. They think we're nuts for hiring people to stay and care for the cats when we are away. I only half joke that diabetic cat owners need to establish a co-op style system to cover each other off.

And the cost?

We figure it was our turn to have special needs cat. We're just lucky he came along at a time when we could handle the expense. As we watch Joe swagger across the kitchen floor with his pot belly and bald spot from the latest skirmish with his sister we feel very

lucky as well. He is definitely a high maintenance model, but while we set out to give him and Rose a good life, they have returned it many many times over.



JOE NAPPING WITH SISTER ROSE

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## Volunteer Profile continued

Dave is one of those special individuals who gives freely of his time to help people as well as animals and on his days off you, might find him collecting pledges or acting as a parade marshall at such diverse events as the Alzheimers Forget Me Not walk, The weekend To End Breast Cancer, The Vancouver Marathon, The Walk for MS, The Sun Run or the Shakespearian Festival to name a few.

When Dave takes time off from his regular government office job and all his volunteer duties he enjoys adventure vacations such as back packing and trekking from Machu Picchu, Peru or a horseback camping excursion in the foothills of the Rockies. This year Dave brushed up on his Spanish and in November he flew off to Mexico to learn more of the

history and culture on a trip to Copper Canyon.

When Dave has spare time, he enjoys reading. Dave walks and uses public transportation to get around the lower mainland and neither snow or floods or heatwaves have ever stopped him from carrying out his volunteer duties.

If you asked the cats they would tell you that the best thing about life in the shelter are the people who come to volunteer and keep coming year after year after year because we all know the #1 rule is; "cats don't like change in their lives" and to have the people they know and trust come to see them on a regular basis is as good as it gets.

Thanks Dave and we hope you will keep on a a volunteer until every last cat has his/her very own home.

# KIDS WHO CARE



**Daniel**

For the third year in a row Daniel has made his birthday a time to share with our homeless animals. We've had a number of one time birthdays on our behalf but Daniel is a really special youngster to keep us in his celebrations for three years.

A really big thank you Daniel to you and your family.

**Ellery**

Another generous donation in honour of a birthday came to us from Ellery and her family and friends. Ellery has made a practice of sharing her birthdays and 2008 was RCHS lucky year. Ellery went on to foster a mom and kittens so she knows first hand how many needs homeless animals have.



Thank you Ellery for helping the animals.

## Royal City Humane Society

Mailing Address: Box 0102, 667 Columbia Street, New Westminster B.C. V3M 1A8 604 524-6447 www.rchs.bc.ca

**Yes!** I would like to make a donation to the RCHS to help animals in need.

- One-Time Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly Donation \_\_\_\_\_
- \$25     \$35     \$50
- \$75     \$100     \$200

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please accept my annual membership fee of \$20.

- Cheque Enclosed
- Sponsor a Spay/Neuter please accept my \$50.00 donation so I can sponsor sterilizing a feral (wild) cat.

I Do Not Require A Receipt

Donations may be made on our Website [www.rchs.bc.ca](http://www.rchs.bc.ca)

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The Royal City Humane Society is a registered, no kill animal charity based in New Westminster, BC. As the only charity animal shelter in New Westminster, RCHS campaigns against pet overpopulation and cares for stray, injured and abandoned animals by testing them for disease, sterilizing and tattooing and finding them new homes. RCHS is 100% volunteer run. Funding is obtained through various fund raising activities, memberships and donations, and all funds are spent on the welfare of the animals.

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